

## **DOUBLE STANDARD OR HIGHER STANDARD?**

Twenty-four years after the fact, George W. Bush was bombarded with questions relating to his conviction of driving while under the influence of alcohol. The ensuing media frenzy prompted Republicans to cry foul, citing numerous character and moral flaws in the present administration that did not draw such attention, if any attention at all (e.g., Mr. Gore's use of marijuana). The problem, as stated by Republicans, is that there is an obvious double standard in the way the media covers national politics. Why is it, they wonder, that conservative candidates are held to a much higher standard or expectation of morality and principle than the liberal politicians?

The answer provides an important message to Christians.

The reason conservatives are held to a higher standard is because they have made character and morality an issue. Those who set high standards are subject to scrutiny by those who do not necessarily subscribe to those standards. An argument can be made regarding double standards. But that argument is neither valid nor successful when caught with your hand in the cookie jar. It's beside the point.

What does this have to do with the church? Everything! We proclaim righteousness and holiness. We are purportedly the light pointing the lost to the Savior; the salt of the earth designed to season and preserve society with truth and integrity. The standard to which the world expects Christians to attain, therefore, is the standard which we espouse. We should not expect the world to attain, much less aspire to the standard of morality and integrity set forth in Scripture. But we should expect to draw fire and accusations of hypocrisy when we do not maintain the high standards corresponding to Christianity.

We cannot justify our careless conduct on the basis that we are not as bad as the world. Christ calls us to a higher standard. We must accept the double standard, if that is what you want to call it, and step up to that challenge.

"I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." -- Romans 12:1-2

The irony is that non-Christians seem to have a better understanding of what behaviors and conduct are not consistent with Christianity. Drinking, smoking, etc.